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EASTERN EUROPEAN INTELLIGENCER

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17 May 1968

Yugoslav Press Strongly Endorses Czechoslovak Liberalization

The Yugoslav weekly Komunist has strongly endorsed the developments in Czechoslovakia by calling for "sincere and comprehensive" support for Prague from all socialist forces and by attacking the "unjustifiable" opposition by some socialist countries. In addition, a 15 May Tanyug report on the recently concluded Nikezic-Hajek talks noted that Belgrade's Foreign Minister came away from Prague convinced that the new regime will not lose control of the situation.

These two press items represent Yugoslavia's most candid support of the Czechoslovaks and the Komunist article is the first implied criticism of Soviet sabre-rattling.

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Bulgarian Reprints Soviet Anti-Masaryk Article

Sofia appears intent on steering a middle course through the explosive situation in Eastern Europe which has been fused by Czechoslovakia's liberalization.

On 15 May the Bulgarian party daily Rabotnichesko Delo reprinted a recent Soviet press article which was sharply critical of the late Thomas Masaryk, the architect of democracy in Czechoslovakia. Bulgaria's course of action has the advantage from Sofia's point of view of demonstrating its close Soviet links without directly criticizing Prague. Czechoslovakia may fret about Bulgaria's conduct, but Prague probably is grateful that Sofia has not decided to engage in polemics similar to the unpleasanties being received from Warsaw and Pankow.

25X1

French President Soft Pedals Nationalism During Rumanian Visit

Both De Gaulle and Rumanian party chief Ceausescu are making it unmistakably clear that they are fully committed to serving their national interests, but each has been very careful to avoid offending the sensibilities of the Soviet Union. In Pitesti on 17 May, Ceausescu said that "Rumanian-French friendship is not directed at any other countries," while De Gaulle reiterated the special relationship between Paris and Bucharest.

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Ceausescu's overall responses to De Gaulle's speeches suggests that the wily Rumanian leader does not intend to be drawn into any grandiose plan espoused by the French leader. Rather, the impression emerges that Ceausescu sees in De Gaulle a transient leader, who would not hesitate to drop Rumania should the Paris-Moscow detente suddenly experience renewed possibilities for quickening.

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#### Hungarian Church-State Relations Deadlocked

The Kadar regime reportedly is unwilling to seriously negotiate with the Roman Catholic Church because of the current tension in Eastern Europe. The regime reportedly is concerned that any conciliatory gestures would be viewed as the beginning of a free-wheeling reform drive in Hungary and thus would increase agitation for a Czechoslovak-style liberalization in Hungary.

The Hungarian Catholic hierarchy is virtually non-existent because of the regime's refusal to approve replacement of deceased bishops. Insufficient state financial support and the status of Cardinal Mindszenty, also are outstanding problems.

emphasizes Kadar's ambivalent position in regards to the Czechoslovak reform movement. Kadar supports the Czechoslovak's right to adopt their own forms of communism, but he does not want to be swept along on a wave of reform whose initiative he probably would not be able to control.

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